

ABSTRACT

THESIS: The importance of being healing: assessing priorities and cross-country variations in the vital features of the hospital physical environment from patients' perspective.

STUDENT: Iryna Yefimchuk

DEGREE: Master of Science

COLLEGE: College of Architecture and Planning

DATE: July 2019

PAGES: 120

Over the last decades, a growing number of studies with an emphasis on the hospital physical environment yielded strong evidence that more comfortable, safe, informative, and aesthetically appealing environments tend to relieve patients' stress, improve wellbeing, expedite healing processes, and increase overall satisfaction with medical facilities. Most studies on the impact of environmental design, however, are hypothesis-driven, and few studies aim to be exploratory about the patients' priorities and their nature.

The current study intends to bridge the gap and reach two objectives: the first objective is to assess patient priorities in the key features of the hospital physical environment. The second objective seeks to compare the patients' priorities in populations of diverse healthcare experience and backgrounds between Ukraine and the United States. Ukraine is a developing country, undergoing the process of reforming an outdated healthcare system, and the United States is a country with a well-established healthcare system with high investment rates in research, innovation, and a focus on medical technology. The study aims to determine whether design preferences are universal or culturally driven.

As the world rapidly globalizes, the development of medical facilities in different countries heads in the same direction but with various speed and efficiency. Meanwhile, most of the healthcare studies carried out today focus on the developed world, offering solutions and guidelines, which deem to be too expensive and too culturally specific to be applied worldwide. Therefore, the results of the study provide an attempt to contribute data on culturally specific priorities and set a foundation for further studies aimed at globally-affordable improvements in hospitals.